

THE  
VILLAGE MODEL.

A TALE.

BY MARY ELLIOTT.

LONDON :  
DARTON AND CLARK,  
HOLBORN HILL.

PRICE THREE-PENCE.







THE VILLAGE MODEL;

OR,

TRUTHS OF TO-DAY.

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THE CREATION;

OR,

GOD'S FIRST WORKS.

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# THE VILLAGE MODEL;

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WHEN little Martha looked at the work her mother had fixed for her to sew, and then glanced her eyes on the lesson she was to learn, the task seemed an endless one; and she wondered that any one could expect a child like her to perform so much. Besides, the day was so very fine, that she wished to take a walk in the fields, rather than sit in a dismal room, from which she could see nothing but the tiresome garden that was always before her.

Yet the dismal room was a large and handsome parlour, the tiresome garden a very pretty one; and at the moment she was grumbling at the sameness of the scene, birds were singing their sprightly songs from many a tree, as if to reprove her for finding fault without cause.

It was not yet noon ; and already had Martha enjoyed an early walk, eaten a good breakfast, and felt assured the dinner-table would supply all that was needful and proper.

To procure these comforts, no aid was required from her. She had but trifling duties to perform ; and these were made light by the kindness of her parents, who never pressed upon her more than children ought to do, and gave her due praise when she acted as they wished.

Martha really believed herself in a great deal of trouble, and was getting quite fretful, when she found out that while she was thinking of her hard case, a great part of her sewing was done ; and that the very, very long seam, now looked but a short one.

At first she was surprised, then pleased ; and, taking heart, in much less than an hour came to the end of the work. Still there was the lesson to learn ; but as she had conquered the work, she supposed the lesson might be conquered also ; so, taking up the book, she made a fair trial, and the task proved more easy than any she had ever learned before ; so that long before dinner time, all the morning hardships were over ; and Martha had leisure to stroll in the garden, and pick a nosegay for a friend who came to dine with her mother.



The lady was much pleased with the gift; and said she doubted not but Martha could use her fingers as well, when applied to the needle.

“ I like,” said she, “ to see young people employed; for it is good both for the health and mind; lazy people seldom enjoy health like the active; and I am certain are never so happy; because doing our duty makes us all feel cheerful; and children are caressed and loved when they do what is right; and their spirits being gay, they are more alive to what is pleasant than those who are older, and share the troubles of the world. I have two nieces much about Martha’s age, who think it a trouble to learn a short lesson, or do a trifle of needlework. They will not believe that others, not older than themselves, can do more; they are always complaining, and of course improve very slowly. When I see them sitting with sour faces, looking at their work in despair, or holding the book in their hands, with eyes turned another way, it grieves me sadly: and then there is so much fretting and weeping, that their faces are always pale, and their spirits depressed. I long to see them at play, and happy as children should be; but such will never be the case with the idle.”

Martha heard this account in silence ; but she thought it was very like her own conduct in the early part of the morning, and felt glad that she had conquered her idle fit.

“ I mean,” said her friend, “ to ask my nieces to visit me this autumn ; and I hope to convince them of their fault, by letting them witness the good effects of industry, and that, too, in a class of life where real hardships are to be conquered ; not a few stitches of work, nor a few pages of reading and spelling. Yes ; they must see my Jenny in her daily pursuits—view her brothers and sisters guided by her example, and tended by her care. Such a sight will, I trust, be of service to the idle girls ; and prove Jenny’s value to those above her, as well as her own humble rank.”

“ Pray tell me about this Jenny,” cried Martha, “ how she came to be so good, and where she lives.”

“ I will, my dear ; Jenny lives in the village where I reside, and is the eldest of eight children, who, alas ! are bereft of a mother. Their father is a day-labourer, and earns but eight shillings a week ; which trifling sum can procure but little to maintain so large a family ; and still worse, he is not a saving, careful parent : no, he has some bad habits, that lead him

to spend a part of his wages in an idle way ; and thus he injures his own health and his children's welfare.

“ When his wife died, everybody felt pity for the children, and feared they would become vagrants ; for who was to act a mother's part to them ? Who would keep their clothes in order, and their persons clean ; prepare their scanty meals, and watch over their conduct ? All this was quite a grief to the neighbours, who saw the evil, but had not power to prevent it. Little did any of us think how well all these duties would be performed, and by a mere child.”

“ Why, surely Jenny could not make herself so useful ? ”

“ No other than poor Jenny ; who, although three or four years older than yourself, is yet a young creature to perform so many duties.

“ There she lives, in the little cottage of her father, keeping every part of it in order, as well as her brothers and sisters ; whom she sends to school as neat and clean as the nicest child I know. Then breakfast, dinner, and supper, are each prepared in proper time ; and, if coarse and simple the food, she takes pains to make all appear good, by the clean method she adopts in placing the meals before the

happy family, who enjoy the repast, and covet no richer.

“Between these acts of duty, Jenny is not idle; for when the farmers can give her employ she is ready to embrace it, and does more field-work in a day, than any child of her age in the village.”

“Well,” said Martha, “I must own she is a clever girl, and deserves to be praised and loved; and although her father is not so good as he ought to be, I think he must be fond and proud of such a daughter, who does so much for his other children, and makes his home one of comfort to him. But how do they manage to pay their rent? For I should fear that all their earnings would not do that, small as their cottage may be. I know when Christmas comes, my good Sally always sends some of her wages to her parents, to help to pay for rent; which, she says, is their greatest trouble.”

“Rent is a great drawback on the comforts of the peasant; but I rejoice to say, that Jenny’s father lives under a landlord who delights in easing the burthens of the poor, and lets the hard-working man reside in his cottage without paying any rent; so that Jenny and her parent have no trouble of that kind.

“ The wife and daughters of this kind landlord take equal pains to extend the comforts of the needy, whose conduct deserves their help ; and you may suppose that our little friend Jenny shares such notice. Their purse procures the worsted which she and her sisters knit into stockings ; they likewise pay the children’s schooling, and send clothes to Jenny, which she mends for them, and is either well paid, or receives a part of them when mended, besides many a treat of bacon and other food, which to these hardy rustics are dainties they could not partake through their own means.”

“ They must be very good people,” observed Susan.

“ They are so, my dear ; and it is well when riches fall to the lot of such persons, for they know how to apply them ; and while they assist the poor, and give comfort to the sick, they forget not to forward the work of industry, and thus shame the idler ; and I have no doubt our Village Model will always find a friend in this worthy family.”

“ I am glad Jenny is so noticed,” said Martha ; “ and wish she may never lose these kind friends. It must be a pretty sight to see Jenny and her brothers and sisters all employed.”

“ It is, Martha ; and one that does honour

to all parties. When the labours of the day are over, you may see Jenny seated at work, her sisters knitting by her side, and her brothers learning their lessons. Busy as she is, she can find time to look at what her sisters are doing, and see that it is done well; she likewise hears them all repeat what they learn, that they may be perfect in the same when they go to school. For my part, I enjoy the scene far more than I should the gayest parties, and believe that none can feel more happy than my gentle villager; she can look back to the pursuits of the day, conscious of having done her duty, and earned something towards the support of those she loves. All around her is neat, and wears an air of comfort; everything in order, by means of her own labour. All is the work of her hands; and the busy smiling faces before her look thus happy, because she has taught them to be good, and been a mother to them. Few children deserve esteem more than the humble Jenny, and no rank nor wealth could raise her higher in our regards; because her present merits spring from virtue, and not the things of the world."

"How much I admire your Jenny," said Martha: "and how much I should like to see her."

"Which pleasure you may enjoy, my dear



Martha, if your good mother will allow of your joining my nieces when they come to visit me."

Martha's eyes turned upon her mother, whose smile bespoke the answer she desired, and her joy was very great; for she longed to see the sweet girl of whom she heard so much good. Yet we must confess, Martha did not expect very lively pleasure in mixing with the two idle children her friend Mrs. Lane had described; but truth whispered that their faults were not unlike her own, and that only a few hours had passed since she herself fancied sewing and spelling were great hardships: so Martha felt that she must not be too severe on others.

After that day, Martha often thought of Jenny and her family, and she much wished to see such a girl in her own village: so she peeped into every cottage, hoping to find the treasure, but without success.

One day as Martha was crossing a meadow, she met a pretty-looking girl, with rosy colour, and smoothly-combed hair, in neat, or rather smart attire; for her frock was smartly trimmed, and her bonnet gay with ribbons.

The rustic courtesy and blushing cheeks of the child, proved she was of lowly birth, or

Martha could not have supposed she belonged to country folks.

Martha, quite pleased with the beauty of the child, inquired her name and place of abode.

Mary Parkes pointed to a white cottage, that looked almost as pretty as herself, and said her mother was a poor widow, with four children, of whom she was the eldest.

Martha gave her a penny, and promised to call at the cottage some day.

“What a sweet child,” said she to Sally, her maid; “and she cannot be idle to earn such nice clothes. And, if her mother is a poor widow, she could not afford to buy that handsome frock; could she, Sally?”

“No, my dear; nor do I think the little girl has earned it: but as you mean to see her again, I shall say no more upon the subject.”

Martha thought it very odd; but was certain that Mary was very much like Mrs. Lane’s Jenny.

At the end of a week, Martha obtained leave to go to the white cottage, with a trifling present for the widow.

A neatly-kept garden made her think still more highly of the pretty rustic; for she guessed Mary’s care must have brought it into such order.

Sally walked about the garden, while Martha



entered the cottage; on the threshold of which she stepped upon an open book, with torn and soiled leaves.

“ Ah! some naughty little dunce has done this; I shall scold my new friend Mary, for letting the book be so spoiled.”

Martha picked it up; and, looking round, perceived Mary herself, seated upon a low stool, sucking her thumb; while some work, dirty as a beggar's garment, laid untouched in her lap. Her blooming cheeks were masked in dirt, her hair uncombed, and in a tangled state, appeared anything but shining; and the finely-trimmed frock, spotted with grease, hung in tatters about her heels. No good-humoured smile decked her pretty features; and Martha stood in fixed surprise, scarcely believing that she had ever seen this sulky child before.

Mary raised her eyes, and seemed rather ashamed of being seen in such a mood.

“ Where is your mother?” asked Martha, in a timid tone; for her spirits fled as she viewed the scene.

“ Out in the fields,” replied Mary.

“ And what have you to do in her absence?”

This question roused the idle girl.

“ O, mother always leaves me enough to do; I have all round this pinafore to hem, and to tidy up the room, and wash my face.”

“ I think, Mary, you might have done that before, for it is very dirty ; and, dear me, why do you not mend your frock, that looked so pretty, when I met you the other day ? I am sure it must have cost your mother many shillings.”

“ No, indeed ; for 'Squire Brown's daughter gave it to me that day ; but I have torn it to-day at play, and brother Joe spilled his milk over it.”

“ And did Joe tear this book ? ”

Mary made no reply ; but her looks quite cleared her brother from the charge.

“ Don't you help your mother in the fields, Mary ? ”

“ Not yet : Judy and Ann are with her to-day.”

“ But if you are the oldest, I think you might work too. Oh ! Mary, I see you are not the girl I took you to be, and I am sorry for it ; for I thought to be very fond of you, and ask my mother to assist you.”

Then laying the present she brought on the table, Martha turned away, and joined Sally in the garden, who was not in the least surprised when she heard the sad account of the pretty rustic, whom she knew to be an idle child, and one that did not obey her mother.

“ Of what use is a pretty face ? ” said Sally :

“ it will neither make us good, nor do our duties for us. You never heard Mrs. Lane say that her Jenny was handsome ; and yet those who see her and know her worth, never think about her beauty, or want of it. When you saw Mary for the first time, I was sorry to perceive how proud she was of the dress which Miss Brown had given her ; and, I must say, a very foolish present it was ; for a plain frock would much better suit a village child : and, as Mary is neither careful nor tidy, such a fine dress would do her more harm than good.”

“ Very true, Sally ; though when I first met Mary, I was so pleased with her looks, that I thought she could not be too well dressed. But how cross she looked to-day ; as if the work she had to do was the greatest hardship in the world.”

“ Every trifle is a hardship to the idle ; and do you know, my dear, that I once feared you were inclined to think so ; and you cannot think how happy it makes me, to see how active you are getting, and the many useful things I see you perform.”

“ It is very true, Sally ; I really did think much of a little trouble, and my tasks were great evils to me ; but I was getting over such idle habits, when Mrs. Lane told me about the good Jenny ; and since that time I find it quite

easy to do all that is required of me. I have  
read in a little book,

“ That time misspent is time destroyed;  
But time well used is time enjoyed.”

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# THE CREATION:

OR,

GOD'S FIRST WORKS.

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THERE is a great delight in watching the seasons as they come and go. The spring, with its green beauties, cheering us after the gloom and cold of winter; the summer, bright in its flowers and sunshine, followed by autumn, rich in its gifts and charms, fruitful in its sources for our future comforts.

While the eye views these fair scenes in their turn, and the heart expands with pleasure, shall we not ask whence comes so much of good, and who is the mighty Giver?

Mighty, indeed! and great beyond what thought can form. God was the maker and



creator of all ; and he began his work by creating the heaven and the earth. The first day brought forth light ; the second day the sky appeared ; on the third day, the earth with its produce ; on the fourth day, the sun, the moon, and stars appeared ; on the fifth day, the fishes and the birds were created ; and on the sixth day, every beast of the earth and creeping thing ; and lastly, man, to be the lord and ruler of all living things. On the seventh day the Almighty rested from his labours, for all was complete.

And thus was formed the great scene of nature, whose produce is man's succour : and when we look around and behold her fair aspect, surely we may give due praise to the Divine Author of the bounty.

The first man was called Adam, and his help-mate was named Eve : and these were the first of the human race, the parents of us all.

Adam and Eve enjoyed perfect bliss ; for they were loved of God, happy in themselves, with every wish and want supplied. Sin was then unknown.

Those beasts whose fierceness now make us tremble, were then mild as the gentle kid : the reptile, whose venom brings deadly harm to all it stings, had then no power to injure : all was peaceful, from Adam to the most humble of creation.



Our first parents needed no costly garments nor stately palaces ; nature formed their garb, and gave them a home ; no bleak north wind or chilling frost trespassed upon their comforts ; there was but one season, and that was smiling summer. Trees of lovely verdure spread their shady branches ; flowers, fragrant as blooming, sprang up on every side. This spot of beauty was planted by the hand of God, and he called it the garden of Eden, or Paradise ; and a river flowed through the garden to water it ; and the choicest fruits of the earth grew in plenty ; and leave was given to Adam and his partner that they might partake of these fruits, growing but for their use ; but of one tree they were told not to eat ; for it was the tree of knowledge, showing good from evil ; therefore, it was the Lord's commandment that it should remain untouched.

Is it not sad to think that although man and woman enjoyed all these gracious gifts, and knew that to eat of that tree of knowledge was sinning against their Maker ; yet self-will and weakness of duty led them to disobey ?

In vain the bending boughs of ripe fruits offered their juicy sweets to the happy inmates of the garden ; the feast was not complete without sharing the fruit of knowledge.

Of all beasts the serpent was the most cun-

ning, and sought to lower his master in the eye of the Creator ; for Adam was endowed with mind, sense, and feeling ; and therefore far above the creatures of the earth, who yielded to his power ; and to each he gave a name, and God approved of the same.

Well ! the serpent first tried its art upon Eve ; and told her there would be no harm in eating of the tree of knowledge ; and that God forbade the same, knowing that to eat such fruit would open her heart to wisdom, and make her like unto the Supreme.

It is right to improve the mind, and show we value the sense which our Maker has bestowed : but Eve had no such motive when she was tempted of the serpent : for she knew that God was above all knowledge, and his commands holy ; yet she dared to act against his will : and having listened to the subtle beast, her desire to eat of the tree increased, her sense of duty became weaker, and at length she took of the fruit, and offered the same to her husband.

Now Adam was aware to eat of the fruit was to sin : and he also had heard from the voice of the Almighty, “ that in the day he should eat thereof he should surely die.” But death was as a dream to him : he knew not its pains, he knew not the stings of remorse which bad conduct can inflict : so he too

was tempted, and ate of the fruit his wife gave him.

Truly was it called the knowledge of good and evil; for in an instant their eyes were opened to their helpless and naked state; and in that same moment they passed from virtue to sin: the sense of guilt pressed upon their hearts; they were full of shame and sorrow. Conscious of their faults, they heard the voice of their Maker in dismay. Fain would they seek shelter among the trees of the garden; but in Eden there was no shade for guilt: all stood confessed as open day to the eye which is never closed, but from hour to hour takes notice of all that's done.

Again the voice of the Lord called to Adam, who, trembling as he answered, owned he was afraid to appear in the presence of his Maker.

And when God inquired why he was thus afraid, and if he had eaten the forbidden fruit; he excused his error by blaming the woman, whom the goodness of God had given unto him. And the woman also tried to excuse herself by accusing the serpent.

But the truth was plain to the Great Judge of all, and his anger was stirred against the guilty pair, who had so ill repaid his mercy: but on the wily beast who had beguiled them he first passed sentence.

And he cursed the serpent; and decreed that it should henceforth crawl the earth upon its belly, and eat of the dust; and also that between it and mankind, hatred should prevail, each as foe to the other.

Alas! What must our first parents have felt while this awful sentence was passing, knowing how soon judgment would be pronounced on themselves?

To the woman God said, "Thou shalt have sorrow with thine offspring, and thy husband shall rule over thee."

Man's sentence, though last, was not the least. Thus saith the Lord: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife and eaten of the tree of which I forbade thee to eat, cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: dust thou art and to dust shalt thou return."

And now were all their joys at an end, for God could not allow sinners to reside in Paradise: the beauteous garden, so late their happy home, was about to be closed upon them for ever. Driven from nature's choicest spot, the

east entrance was guarded by angels with a flaming sword, against which, their feeble strength had no power : so they took their way from Eden, outcasts of God, and alone in the world.

But He who could punish, could also be merciful ; and ere they left the scene of repose, God clothed them with skins : for they were now to be exposed to change of season, and those mortal ills, from which, until that period, they had been exempt.

It was then that toil and labour were entailed upon man : his wants became of a coarser and more pressing kind : the earth, though fruitful, required the aid of culture ; and there was but Adam to labour.

And Adam called his wife Eve ; meaning the mother of all living. But when they quitted Paradise they had no children ; that blessing and sorrow combined, was yet to come, and it was not until they toiled for their bread and felt the weight of sin, that Eve bare a son, whom his parents called Cain ; and his birth gave joy to his father and mother ; for it was soothing to love what was pure and innocent : and as yet their offspring knew no guile. And in time, Eve bare a second son, who was called Abel ; and to him also his parents' hearts turned with

joy, for it seemed a new proof of God's mercy ; and they trusted that evil was not to cling to them through life ; they knew indeed that they should die, and return to dust, for such were the words of their Maker : but the fear of death was weakened when they looked forward to the kind and tender care they should receive from their children ; and for this new source of love, they were grateful to the divine Giver.

Thus Adam and Eve were the first who bore the sacred title of father and mother ; and sweet were the sounds to their ears ; but they were now to learn how bitter to a parent's heart is the sense of a child's errors ; for their joys were cut short by the evil ways of their first-born.

With this increase of mankind, came an increase of wants ; and therefore Adam made Cain a tiller of the ground like himself : and they sowed the seed, and watched its growth, and thus aided nature.

But Abel was a tender of sheep, or a shepherd ; and his gentle nature well suited the simple calling.

The tempers and minds of the brothers were far unlike each other. Cain was harsh of nature, given to jealous feelings, and not keeping the fear of God before his eyes. Now Abel



loved and obeyed his parents, and he loved his brother also, and bore him no ill-will for any good he might perceive in him: the tie of nature was strong in his heart towards his brother; for were they not the first who lived on such terms?

In those days of simple worship, Adam and his children gave thanks to the Almighty in offerings of the fruits of the earth, or of their flocks; and they had no other forms.

It came to pass that Cain went forth to make his offer; and it was of the produce of the field, but his heart was not pure; and He who searches all hearts saw into the deceit of Cain, and would not accept of his offering; but when the pious Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, the same was grateful to the Lord, and met favour in his sight.

The virtuous Abel rejoiced in the Divine notice, and was strengthened in his good feelings; but Cain looked with evil eye on his brother, when he saw that God favoured him: he did not demand of himself whence arose this neglect of his vows, nor did he feel conscious that some fault of his own rendered the offering of no avail; he was displeased with the Most High; envy rankled in his bosom, and from envy sprang hatred towards his virtuous brother.

Then the voice of the Lord came unto Cain,

saying, "Why art thou wrath, and why lookest thou sad? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at thy door."

But Cain heeded not this warning of mercy ; his thoughts turned to worldly feeling, and he became a sinful man.

To Abel he spake fair, and went forth with him to the field. No doubt the heart of Abel was joyful, for he had just received proof of his Creator's love ; and he was in converse with his only brother, whose welfare was as dear to him as his own ; therefore his speech was joyful, and his face smiling.

And can we believe that at this moment of pure delight, the mind of Cain should harbour the least intent to destroy the sweetest tie of nature ; that he should raise hand to take that life which God alone can give? Yet so the Scripture saith ; and we are told "that even while they communed, Cain rose up against his brother and slew him."

Murder, the foulest of crimes, now first stained the earth ; and the blood that flowed was that of a brother ; and the blow that caused death was given by the hand of a brother ; and the soul of Cain was loaded with guilt, for the sin was his alone.

Again the dreaded voice of the Lord ad-



dressed him, saying, "Where is thy brother?" and the false, the coward tongue of Cain answered, "I know not, am I my brother's keeper?"

But God said, "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground; and now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a vagrant shalt thou be in the earth."

These were awful words, and must have struck terror into the breast of the wretched Cain; but he was not humbled; and overcome with his crime, he even thought he was punished with a heavy hand, and was bold enough to complain that he could not bear so much of evil.

To be driven from his parents and home, and at some future time when the world should be peopled, to be at the mercy of his fellow-creatures, who might slay him as he had slain Abel, seemed a lot too hard for man; but above all, Cain felt how sad it would be to lose the hope of God's mercy.

"And from thy face shall I be hid." Thus said Cain in the keenness of his anguish. Death would have been a blessing to the guilty son of

Adam ; but the Lord decreed, “ that none should lay hands on Cain to slay him ; for on such should vengeance be taken sevenfold.” So he set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him, should kill him.

And now Adam and his partner knew, and felt the extent of their own sin ; the first cause of God’s wrath ; and they had to lament the death of a pious and beloved child, the comfort of their lives. But the crime of Cain was a deeper grief, for they had no hope in him ; their home was no longer his home ; the command of the Almighty must be fulfilled ; and Cain turned his back upon his kindred, and the place of his birth, bending his steps to the land of Nod, which lay to the east of Eden.

In this land Cain built a city, which he called after his son Enoch.

Those among us who have brothers, or sisters, can best tell how great was the sin of Cain ; for our hearts feel all the value of such dear ties ; but we should check all approach to envy, lest in time we learn to view the merit of others with a jealous eye ; for then, who shall say how deeply they will not sin ?

We have no longer the voice of God to commend what is right, or reprove what is wrong ; but the youngest of us may learn his will ; which if we obey, we cannot go astray ; for his Word

is open to all, and teaches us to be faithful unto him, dutiful to our parents, loving and kind to our friends.

When the tongue of youth is prompt to utter an unkind word, or the hand of childhood raised in anger against kindred, let the crime of Cain strike on the mind, and prove that Abel died not in vain.

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